LYCIDAS

Lycidas

BY

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In this Monody, the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due:
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew

nself to sing, and build the
lofty rhyme.
e must not float upon his watery
bier
Unwept, and welter to the parch-
ing wind,
Without the meed of some melo-
dious tear.
Begin then, Sisters of the sacred
well,
That from beneath the seat of
Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep
the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy
excuse,
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my
destined urn,

And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable
shroud.
For we were nursed upon the self-
same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain,
shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high
lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the
morn,
We drove a field, and both to-
gether heard
What time the gray-fly winds her
sultry horn,
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh
dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose, at even-
ing, bright,

they were [illegible]
[illegible]

Toward heav'n's descent had
slop'd his west'ring wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were
not mute,
Tempere[illegible]n flute,
Rough [illegible], and Fauns
with [illegible]
From the glad sound would not
be absent long,
And old Damœtas loved to hear
our song.
But Oh, the heavy change, now
thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never
must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods,
and desert caves
With wild thyme and the gadding
vine o'ergrown,

And all their echoes mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses
green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy
soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the
rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling
herds that graze,
Or frost to flow'rs, that their gay
wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shep-
herd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when
the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved
Lycidas?

For 1 ther were ye playing on
: steep,
Where your old Bards, the famous
[illegible]
Nor c [illegible] :op of Mona
h [illegible]
Nor yet wnere Deva spreads her
wizard stream :
Ay me! I fondly dream!
Had ye been there, for what could
that have done?
What could the Muse herself that
Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself for her enchant-
ing son,
Whom universal nature did
lament,
When by the rout that made the
hideous roar,

His gory visage down the stream
was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the
Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with in-
cessant care
To tend the homely slighted
shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thank-
less Muse?
Were it not better done, as others
use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the
shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's
hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear
spirit doth raise

Muse

(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.—But not the praise,
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glis'tring foil
Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies;

But lives and spreads aloft by those
pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging
Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each
deed,
Of so much fame in heav'n expect
thy meed.
O fountain Arethuse, and thou
honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned
with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a
higher mood:
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the herald of the
sea
That came in Neptune's plea;

He asked the waves, and asked the
felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed
this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of
rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked
promontory:
They knew not of his story,
And sage Hippotades their answer
brings,
That not a blast was from his
dungeon strayed,
The air was calm, and on the
level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters
played.
It was that fatal and perfidious
bark,

Built in th' eclipse, and rigged
with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head
of thine.
Next Camus, reverend sire,
went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet
sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and
and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flow'r in-
scribed with woe.
Ah! who hath reft (quoth he)
my dearest pledge?
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals
twain,

ne golden opes, the iron shuts
amain)
Ie shook his mitred locks, and
stern bespake,
How well could I have spared for
thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies'
sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb
into the fold?
Of other care they little reckoning
make,
Than how to scramble at the
shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy
bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce them-
selves know how to hold

A sheep-hook, or have learned
aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's
art belongs!
What recks it them? What need
they? They are sped;
And when they list, their lean
and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of
wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and
are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the
rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion
spread;
Besides what the grim wolf wtih
privy paw

Daily devours apace, and nothing
said;
But that two-handed engine at the
door
Stands ready to smite once, and
smite no more.
Return, Alpheus, the dread voice
is past,
That shrunk thy streams; return,
Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them
hither cast
Their bells, and flow'rets of a
thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild
whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds,
and gushing brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star
sparely looks:
Throw hither all your quaint
enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the
honied showers,
And purple all the ground with
vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that for-
saken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale
jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy
freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-
attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the
pensive head,

1 vernal flowers.
2 Find A words

Anc every flower that sad embroidery wears:

Bid marantus all his beauty shed,

Anc their cups with

To strow the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.

For so to interpose a little ease,

Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.

Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled,

Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,

Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide

Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth: Michael
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth. Cornwall
Weep no more, woeful Shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,

Sunk though he be beneath the
watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean
bed,
And yet anon repairs his droop-
ing head,
And tricks his beams, and with
new spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the
morning sky;
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted
high,
Thro' the dear might of Him that
walked the waves,
Where other groves, and other
streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks
he laves,

And hears the unexpressive nuptial
song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy
and love.
There entertain him all the saints
above,
In solemn troops, and sweet
societies,
That sing, and singing in their
glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from
his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep
no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius
of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt
be good

To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray,
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

1 Doric lay.

2.

[redacted]